



Jennifer Curtis-Whipple
Superintendent
Entry Plan
August 2016

Student Learning



Continuous Professional Growth



Arts Education and Cultural Development

Parent and Community
Engagement



Community Collaboration and Development

Weymouth Public Schools
111 Middle Street
Weymouth, MA 02189

August 25, 2016

Dear Weymouth School Community,

I consider it a privilege to be chosen as the Weymouth Public Schools' Superintendent. I look forward to serving in my new leadership role. I hope to be the leader that we need and epitomize the essence of a true servant leader. In the words of Robert K. Greenleaf, "Servant leadership is a philosophy and set of practices that enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations and ultimately creates a more just and caring world."

It is also an honor to serve alongside leaders who have innovated WPS and continue to strengthen a competitive educational district for students and families. I am grateful to be working with committed educators, students and families who make our school district so exceptional.

It is important to me that I take ample time to better understand the vision and values of all constituents. Although I have been part of WPS for my entire personal and professional life, I believe that it is imperative to take time to listen to students, staff, community members and key stakeholders. Therefore, I have established a formal entry plan that will guide me through this process. This phase of my entry plan will allow me to see all perspectives and ensure the very best for our students. I firmly believe that communication and collaboration are essential to building trust, vision, and growth. My service to Weymouth comes with high expectations and high integrity.

Thank you for supporting the goals and expected outcomes of my Entry Plan. I look forward to your feedback and engaging in this collaborative work.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Curtis-Whipple, Ed.D.

Entry Plan Process

The purpose of an Entry Plan is to organize a set of collaborative inquiry activities, through which information about the school system is collected, organized, interpreted collectively, and used to shed light on successes and establish goals for improvement. My entry plan will guide us in a collective effort to improve the educational opportunities and outcomes for all WPS students. I value equitable access, transparency, and clear and open communication, and it is my intent that my entry plan exemplifies these beliefs. It is designed to embody trust and create the conditions for all of us to learn and work together for the students and families of our community. The plan will enable me to:

1. Learn about the strengths, key events, issues and concerns that influence, or have influenced, the school district
2. Learn about the district and about community values, goals, norms and expectations
3. Conduct a collective examination of the information that results in outlining our priorities for improving our educational community
4. Reevaluate and amend our a strategic plan (Accelerated Improvement Plan, Strategic Levers, District Goals, School Improvement Plans etc.) with timelines for accomplishing our priorities
5. Share the goals of the Massachusetts School Building Authority, (MSBA) project and learn from stakeholders their desires and visions

At the core of my Plan is a sequence of several events that build on one another to arrive at a shared set of goals and a strategic plan to accomplish them:

1. Personal interviews, and focus groups with key persons and/or representatives from each stakeholder group, followed by
2. Document reviews to better understand past and present practices, strategies and outcomes
3. Data Review Meetings with specific groups where the interview data is interpreted together
4. Strategic Planning Meetings where we will discuss a draft that I produce of interview results, goals and action steps with expected outcomes and timelines

Interviews/Focus Groups, Data Collection, School Visits, and Feedback

The purpose of interviews and focus groups is to create a platform for a two-way discussion about the strengths, values, norms and goals of the District and the community. These meetings are designed to help me better understand key issues as well as stakeholder expectations. The interviews and focus groups will be structured using the same or similar questions depending upon the specific role of the individual or group. This ensures a degree of comparability from one individual/group to the next. I will identify general patterns in answers to the same questions and share those general patterns across stakeholder groups. This sharing is with the intent of improving the quality education services we provide to all students. I will visit schools to conduct informal observations of the climate, teaching and learning process/practices and service delivery methods.

It is critical for us to establish trust in order to have an open exchange; therefore, it is imperative that trust is built through respecting the parameters of confidentiality. You can be assured that every conversation will remain confidential unless otherwise agreed upon. I will intentionally end each interview by clarifying any information that the interviewee would like to remain private.

Organization

The Plan is divided into sections based on a variety of stakeholder groups; including, but not limited to Administrators, Central Office Staff and Administration, Weymouth Education Association Board Members, Special Education Parent Advisory Council Chair, Town Wide Parent Council President, Town Officials, Teachers and other school staff. Each of these sections is organized in the categories of: *Objectives, Entry Activities, and Interview Questions.*

School and District Administrators

Objectives

1. To identify opportunities for shared leadership
2. To define and redefine relationships between principals and the Superintendent, Office of Weymouth Public Schools
3. To identify key issues at the building level related to Weymouth Public Schools
4. To coordinate work on systematic tasks

Entry Activities

1. Interview school principals and/or assistant principal/dean of school **(1 Hr.) (September-November)**
2. Interview District Level Administrators **(1 Hr.) (September-November)**
3. Conduct a Building Administrators data review meeting to discuss collated interview data from school principals and/or assistant principal/dean of school, and use it to: **(1 Hr.) (Beginning of December)**
 - Define expectations related to Superintendent and leadership team protocols
 - Define procedures and norms for relationships between principals and the Superintendent, families and the community
 - Review District Accelerated Improvement Plan and central office strategies and timelines for accomplishing goals related to the plan and building level administration
 - Discuss school year activities
 - Discuss visioning for the Maria Weston Chapman MSBA Feasibility Study
4. Conduct a District Administrators data review meeting to discuss collated interview data from District Administrators, and use it to: **(1 Hr.) (Beginning of December)**
 - Define expectations related to Weymouth Public Schools strategic planning
 - Define procedures and norms for relationships between principals and the Superintendent, families, town agencies/personnel and the community
 - Review District Accelerated Improvement Plan and central office strategies and timelines for accomplishing goals related to the plan and building level administration
 - Discuss school year activities
 - Discuss visioning for the Chapman MSBA Feasibility Study
5. Hold meetings with individuals as necessary to plan for the year's responsibilities and tasks

Interview Questions

1. Please give me a brief biographical sketch to help me get to know you.
2. What accomplishments do you look upon with pride as an administrator?
3. What goal would you most like to achieve in your department/building and what makes achieving it difficult?
4. Describe your past interactions with central office/principals, principals/principals, principals/community
5. How do you see the district goals related to your SIP and the District AIP?
6. What is a key systems issue that you think the district must face in the next three years? Why is each important? Which issues require immediate action? Please try to rank these issues in order of priority.
7. What would you most like to see preserved in your building/department? In the district? What would you most like to see changed?
8. Are there areas of decision making which are unclear? Discussions of this question cover but are not limited to your role in curriculum, staffing, budgeting, service delivery, etc.
9. What is one thing that I could act on today to make WPS a stronger system for our students?
10. What do you envision for the MSBA project?

Weymouth Education Association

Objectives

1. Learn about the needs and concerns of the Association
2. Establish collaborative structures to reflect upon, design, and refine practices based upon the need of the Association stakeholders
3. Develop norms for collaboration and communication between the Superintendent and the Association

Entry Activities

1. Conduct a group interview with the officers of the Weymouth Education Association **(2 hours) (Early-September)**
2. Conduct a data review meeting with the Association's officers to share the interview data collected and develop norms with respect to collaboration and communication between the Superintendent and the Association **(2 hours) (September-November)**
3. Schedule meetings with the Association as needed

Interview Questions

1. Please give me a brief biographical sketch of the Association and its members.
2. Describe your past interactions with the Superintendent and the Education Association. What would you describe as a good working relationship?
3. How do you see the district goals related to and aligned with the Associations expected goals and outcomes? What barriers, if any, are there to achieving the goals and outcomes? If there are barriers, what suggestions do you have to overcome those barriers?
4. What is most important to preserve in our schools? What is most important to change?
5. What do you envision for the MSBA project?

Key Educational Stakeholders

Classroom Teachers at each school site (Focus Group Conversations)
Technology Integration Team (Focus Group Conversations)
ELL and Title III support staff (Focus Group Conversations)
Title I Coordinator
McKinney Vento Liaison
DSAC Team (Focus Group Conversations)
Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) (Focus Group Conversations)
Parent Council and Town-Wide Parent Council school representatives
(Focus Group Conversations)
School visits and classroom observations
Instructional Leadership Team (Focus Group Conversations)
Student Advisory Council and student leaders (Focus Group Conversations)
Municipal Department Leaders and Administrators
Town of Weymouth Mayor and Chief of Staff
Faith based community leaders
Local media reporters
Evening School Director
Decision Lead Teacher
Town Council Members
Transportation, Maintenance, Custodial, and Food Service Staff
Foundations Lead Teacher
Weymouth Educational Foundation Board Members

Objectives

1. To identify opportunities for shared leadership
2. To define and redefine relationships between stakeholders and the Superintendent of Weymouth Public Schools
3. To identify key issues related to Weymouth Public Schools
4. To coordinate work on systematic tasks
5. To gather school community insight for the MSBA project?

Entry Activities

1. Interview school key educational stakeholders **(1 Hr.) (September-December)**

Interview Questions

1. Please give me a brief biographical sketch to help me get to know you/your team.
2. What accomplishments in the school system do you look upon with pride?
3. What goal would you most like to achieve in WPS and what makes achieving it difficult?
4. Describe your past interactions with WPS and how can I support your efforts?
5. What do you envision for the MSBA project?

Objectives

1. To learn key concerns of key educational stakeholders
2. Establish meaningful and effective modes of collaboration, communication and problem-solving
3. Identify areas of needed improvement in parent education, outreach and communication for key educational stakeholders

School Committee

Objectives

1. To identify key issues relating to Office of the Superintendent
2. Establish effective collaboration and communication relating to key areas in need of attention

Entry Activities

1. Conduct small group interviews with the School Committee **(1Hr.) (September-October)**
2. Meet regularly to report progress towards goals and outcomes **(schedule determined by the School Committee)**

Interview Questions

1. Please give me a brief biographical sketch to help me get to know you and the School Committee.
2. What is the core strength of Weymouth Public Schools? What are the indicators of this?
3. Describe your past interactions between the Superintendent and the School Committee/Community.
4. How do you see the district goals related to and aligned with the School Committee's expected goals and outcomes? What barriers if any, are there to achieving the goals and outcomes? If there are barriers, what suggestions do you have to overcome them?
5. What are the key issues for the School Committee/community?
Which issues need immediate attention? Try to rank these issues in order of priority.
6. What traditions would you most like to see preserved?
What would you most like to see changed?
7. Are there areas of decision making that you would like to discuss? A discussion of this question includes but is not limited to school-level decision-making, district-level decisions, resources, service delivery, etc.?
8. What are the top three needs that the School Committee/community has related to my leadership?
9. What do you envision for the MSBA project?

Document and Data Review

A review of the following documents and data will take place in order to give me a snapshot of present and past practices, norms and outcomes that have shaped WPS Pre-Kindergarten to Post-High School **(August-November)**:

1. District Goals
2. Budget Documents
3. Sample IEP's and 504 Service Plans
4. Curriculum and Assessments
5. Professional Development Plan/Calendar
6. School Improvement Plans
7. MCAS and district Benchmark Data
8. School Committee Goals

9. ACCESS testing results
10. Parent Engagement Committee survey results
11. DESE WPS data
12. A variety of data points and historical documents
13. MSBA statement of interest

Informal School Visits

School visits will be conducted to all district schools. The purpose of the visits will be to observe teaching processes and practices, school climate, and service delivery methods **(2 hours each)**
(September-January)

Goals and Next Steps

I will compile the information from the data collected, interviews, and observations and present it to the School Committee, and all applicable educational stakeholders.
(January-February)

Summary

It is my sincere hope that this entry plan will provide me with a well-rounded and unbiased assessment of the WPS. This examination will allow me to move forward with a strategic plan that will support district levers, school community vision, and most importantly our students' future success.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Curtis-Whipple